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Letter dated 23 April 2008 from the Permanent Representatives of Barbados and Iceland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the conclusions of the High-level Round Table on International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Caribbean Small Island Developing States, held in Bridgetown from 25 to 27 March 2008, launching new partnerships between Iceland and Caribbean small island developing States (see annex).

The event was organized jointly by the Governments of Barbados and Iceland and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

We should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

(*Signed*) Christopher Fitzherbert **Hackett**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 23 April 2008 from the Permanent Representatives of Barbados and Iceland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

High-level Round Table on International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Caribbean Small Island Developing States

(Bridgetown, 25-27 March 2008)

Conclusions of the meeting

1. From 25 to 27 March 2008, representatives of the Governments of 16 small island developing States and low-lying coastal States in the Caribbean region, the Government of Iceland, the Caribbean Community Secretariat and other regional intergovernmental and technical institutions, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and other organizations of the United Nations system, representatives of civil society, including business leaders from Iceland and the Caribbean, and other invited stakeholders held a High-level Round Table on International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Caribbean small island developing States in Bridgetown, under the Co-Chairmanship of Christopher Sinckler, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Barbados, and Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland.

Advancing implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

2. Participants reiterated their commitment to incorporating the three pillars of sustainable development, namely, the economic, social and environmental aspects, as outlined in the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[a] and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[b] in their development cooperation initiatives. The meeting supported the need to strengthen the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the implementation of the Programme of Action in the Caribbean.

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[a] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[b] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

Commitment of Iceland to enhanced development cooperation with Caribbean small island developing States

3. Participants identified mutual areas of interest with respect to increasing cooperation, namely, sustainable use of natural resources, climate change, clean energy, ocean management, capacity-building and the advancement of women, and in so doing welcomed the Island Growth Initiative presented by the Government of Iceland as a framework mechanism within which to advance Iceland's commitment to development collaboration with Caribbean small island developing States partners, in support of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

Areas of common interest and concern

4. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the capacity and resilience of small island developing States in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. They welcomed initiatives to strengthen private sector cooperation, and reaffirmed the importance of increased investment, economic diversification, new and innovative business partnerships and greater technical and financial resources in the promotion of development cooperation. These innovations and approaches were acknowledged to be invaluable in overcoming common developmental challenges of Caribbean small island developing States such as a narrow resource base, small domestic markets, high cost of energy, transportation and communication, vulnerable infrastructure, and vulnerability to natural hazards.

Renewable energy

5. Participants identified investment in and the development of renewable energy resources as a key area of mutual interest for strengthened cooperation between Iceland and the Caribbean. They resolved to explore opportunities for renewable energy development in such areas as geothermal energy, hydropower, solar, wind, ocean energy and biomass including biofuel.

Fisheries management

6. Participants highlighted the importance of the sustainable and responsible use of marine resources, particularly in respect of ocean management and fisheries management. They agreed to pursue strengthened cooperation and sharing of experience in this area.

Capacity-building

7. Participants appreciated the commitment of the Icelandic International Development Agency to exploring possible development cooperation for supporting sustainable development in Caribbean small island developing States, including in the areas of renewable energy, climate change, disaster management, ocean management and fisheries management. Participants also recognized the importance of capacity-building through training, technical assistance, appropriate transfer of technology and financial mobilization, including microcredit.

Climate change

8. Participants emphasized the disproportionate impact of accelerated climate change on small island developing States. They resolved to continue their close collaboration in addressing the issue at all levels, including through the implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies, and called on the international community and the United Nations system to support the mobilization of technical and financial resources to address the costly impact of climate change.

Advancement of women

9. Participants underlined their commitment to continuing to support the advancement of women in society, and their commitment to giving greater attention to gender issues as a whole, recognizing that this benefits society as a whole. In this context, further cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in order to promote women's participation in sustainable development was welcomed.

Regional and international cooperation

10. The participants welcomed ongoing collaboration between the United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism secretariat, and looked forward to the future establishment of a programme of cooperation between the two organizations under an agreed memorandum of understanding.

11. Participants emphasized the importance of working closely with regional intergovernmental and technical organizations, and the regional academic and research institutions, as well as civil society, including the private sector, to achieve the objectives agreed at the High-level Round Table.

12. Participants also welcomed, in particular, the key role of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the United Nations system in support of this cooperative effort.

Partnership agreements

13. Participants welcomed the efforts to work towards a partnership agreement between the Caribbean small island developing States and the Government of Iceland at the earliest opportunity, and requested the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme to follow up on implementation.

Business cooperation

14. Participants welcomed the holding of the Business and Investment Forum on 27 March 2008. The Forum sought to identify concrete projects for possible cooperation and implementation, particularly in the fields of fisheries management and renewable energy development.